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MEMORANDUM TO: Chief, Estimates Staff

DATE: 11 May 1951

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1A

SUBJECT: Comments on NIE-25

Paragraph 26, last sentence. I question whether we should state so strongly that Chinese intervention entails "an implicit Soviet commitment to support the Chinese Communists, at least to any extent necessary to prevent their defeat." I do not believe that we should go so far as to say the Soviets will intervene rather than permit a Chinese Communist defeat. It might be safer to say that if the Chinese Communists are confronted with defeat, the USSR will either have to come to their rescue or face the possible loss of its control over Communist China.

Paragraph 27, third sentence. Likewise, I feel we go too far in saying that the Kremlin has "emphatically ruled out any abandonment of North Korea." It is true that Soviet propaganda has given this impression and of course Stalin's personal commitment on the subject is important. But I don't think that we should imply, as the present paragraph does, that the Kremlin will pay almost any price in order to save Korea. If it is not prepared for global war, it will hardly permit itself to be drawn into such a war over Korea alone. It would seem safer to say that the Kremlin has thus far ruled out any abandonment of North Korea. In this way we can avoid the implication that it will not abandon North Korea no matter what may happen in the future.

Paragraph 32, second sentence. I take strong issue with the idea that the Kremlin has accepted "hazards" in pursuing the Korean operation.

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It seems to me that Soviet participation has been marked by extreme caution throughout. I very much doubt if the Kremlin would expect us to attack the USSR without warning simply because of its support of the Communists in Korea. The Kremlin would therefore have no reason to consider this support risky until it receives such a warning. So long as it has received no such warning, and so long as its support remains so devious I do not see how we can characterize this support as involving "hazards."

Paragraph 32, third sentence. I think we go too far when we say that the USSR would "probably commit its own (resources) to the extent necessary." The words "to the extent necessary" imply a possible all-out effort, despite the qualifying next sentence. I personally believe that the USSR would commit its own resources only insofar as it could do so without running grave risk of general war.

Fourth sentence of paragraph 33 which states that the USSR "will intend to stop short of that degree of participation which would precipitate unlimited hostilities with the US" seems more accurate. It is, however, apparently inconsistent with paragraph 32.

Paragraph 35. The Soviet reaction will depend not so much on whether the attacks are "limited," but rather on whether they threaten Soviet control in China.

Paragraph 36, last sentence. The country's name might be listed in the order of probability of local aggression, in which case Japan would hardly come first.

Paragraph 45, first sentence. After "Western" insert and "especially US."

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Paragraph 45. Add on the end of the last sentence "or as would constitute an intolerable obstacle to the attainment of Soviet objectives."